

plurality of thought results are sorted by contents, and that displays the total of the evaluation marks corresponding to a plurality of thought results sorted in a same classification.

15. (New) An instrument for contemplation as set forth in claim 14, wherein the medium is a paper capable of displaying words.

16. (New) An instrument for contemplation as set forth in claim 14, wherein the medium is a paper capable of holding the pasting tags displaying words.

17. (New) An instrument for contemplation as set forth in claim 14, wherein the medium is a display of a computer; and the words are shown on the display of the computer.--

REMARKS

Applicant would like to thank the Examiner for a careful review of this application. In view of the above amendments and the included remarks, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this application. Please change the attorney docket number for this application to --09564/002001--.

I. Disposition of Claims

Claims 1-7 have been cancelled. New claims 8-17 have been added. Claims 8 and 14 are independent claims. Claims 9-13 and 15-17 are dependent claims. All new claims 8-17 are fully supported by the specification as originally filed. No new matter has been added.

II. Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 1-3, 6, and 7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Claims 1-3, 6, and 7 have been cancelled in this reply. Thus, this rejection is now moot. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

III. Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 1-7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Microsoft Excel 97 SR-1 file "SolvSamp.xls." Claims 1-7 have been cancelled in this reply. Thus, this rejection is now moot. To the extent that the rejection may apply to the newly added claims, the rejection is respectfully traversed.

The invention as recited in the newly added claims relates to an instrument for contemplation used for solving determined problems and/or fulfilling different types of objectives, called subjects. The instrument for contemplation allows clarifying and arranging the solutions, or actions to be taken, called thought results. Usually, when problems have to be solved and/or objectives fulfilled in, for example, offices or industries, the people concerned are gathered to hold meetings to provide solutions and/or actions to be taken and to exchange opinions regarding, for example, the feasibility of said solutions and said actions.

In order to reach to a conclusion about which solutions and/or actions should be implemented in order to solve the corresponding problem or achieve the corresponding objective, all of the solutions and/or actions have to be selected in accordance to their feasibility, convenience, economy, etc. Once the appropriate solutions and/or actions have been selected, they also have to be arranged or sorted in accordance to specific criteria in order to decide which of the solutions or actions should in fact be implemented and will be most likely to succeed. This selection process usually is very cumbersome, especially when many people have supplied a great amount of solutions or actions.

Therefore, because it takes a lot of time to arrange and evaluate the proposed solutions, meetings can be dragged on over long periods of time and the analysis and issuance of a final conclusion are delayed. The present invention as recited in the newly added claims provides instruments for contemplation that permit compiling, evaluating, and arranging solutions and/or actions to be taken in an easy and effective manner.

In general, the present invention comprises a first group of cells for displaying characters that represent the problems to be solved and/or the objectives to be achieved as well as the solutions and/or actions to be taken to solve the proposed problem and/or achieve the objective.

A second group of cells will display the proposed solutions and/or actions to be taken selected from the proposed solutions and/or actions to be taken displayed in the first group of cells based on specific criteria, such as feasibility, economy, etc. The second group of cells can include cells that include all or part of the selected solutions and/or actions to be taken arranged or sorted in a specific order. Also, the second group of cells can be divided into a plurality of group of cells wherein the number of cells in each group of cells is reduced till the last group of cells includes a single cell. This arrangement of cells permits the selection of the best solution and/or action to be taken by continuously selecting the better solutions and/or actions to be taken from previous selected group of solutions and/or actions until a single best solution and/or action is chosen.

In contrast, Microsoft Excel provides a worksheet including cells for displaying characters, such as numbers. The worksheet can perform calculations using said numbers and displaying the results on cells contiguous to the cells displaying the numbers. Also, the worksheet provides cells for displaying text in order to identify the numbers and the results. Microsoft Excel 97 SR-1 file "SolvSamp.xls," cited in the Office Action, is used to solve for one value or several values to maximize or minimize another value based on given constraints. Microsoft Excel 97 SR-1 file "SolvSamp.xls" is silent regarding selecting a predetermined number of said proposed solutions and/or actions to be taken and/or displaying them in accordance with a predetermined order in neighboring cells.

According to the newly added claims, the thought results displayed initially in the thought units, or at least one of said thought results, will be carried over to the subsequent upper and lower selecting units without any change. The claimed invention also provides display units for carrying over said thought results and for arranging them in a specific manner. The results displayed in each Microsoft Excel worksheet cell differ from its neighboring cell or at least are products, for example, of a calculation based on the previous result.

Specifically, as recited in claim 8, an instrument for contemplation provides a first cell (subject displaying cell) that displays the problems to be solved and/or objectives to be achieved (subject) and a second groups of cells (thought units) which display a plurality of solutions and/or actions to be taken (thought results) in accordance to the subject shown in the subject cell. A first participant of the meeting fills out a first thought unit with thought results he considers

appropriate to solve the subject. Subsequently, another participant fills out another thought unit with thought results he considers appropriate to solve the subject by also considering the thought results proposed by the previous participant.

In order to organize all of the thoughts results such that the best thought result in order to solve the corresponding subject can be obtained, a plurality of selecting units are provided; each one comprising a plurality cells for displaying thought results. The selecting units are arranged such that their number of cells decrease, starting with the selecting unit with the greater number of cells and ending with the selecting unit with only one cell. These selecting units permit to organize the thought results proposed by the participants in order to find the thought result which will be the most appropriate to solve the corresponding subject. This selection is accomplished once all of the thought units have been filled out by the participants.

In order to do this, another participant of the meeting selects from the previous filled out thought units a number of thought results by displaying them in the selecting unit with the greatest number of cells (upper selecting unit). Subsequently, another participant selects from the previously filled out selecting unit another group of thought results and displays them in another selecting unit with a lower number of cells than the previous selecting unit. This process is repeated until finally the selecting unit with only one cell (lower selecting unit) is filled out with the final thought result. The final thought result is the best thought result for solving or accomplishing the subject because the most appropriate thought results have been selected by the participant when displaying in the subsequent selecting units the thought results displayed in a previous selecting units. Therefore, the instrument of contemplation, as recited in claim 8, provides a mean for compiling, evaluating, and arranging solutions and/or actions to be taken to solve problems or accomplish objectives in order to obtain the best solution or action that should be taken.

Similarly, as recited in claim 14, an instrument for contemplation comprises a first cell (subject displaying cell) that displays the problems to be solved and/or objectives to be achieved (subject) and a second groups of cells (thought/ranking units) which display a plurality of solutions and/or actions to be taken (thought results) in accordance to the subject shown in the subject cell. A first participant of the meeting fills out a first thought unit with thought results he

considers appropriate to solve the subject. Subsequently, another participant fills out another thought unit with thought results he considers appropriate to solve the subject considering also the thought results proposed by the previous participant.

In order to organize all of the proposed thought results and display them in an intelligibly manner a rank sorting unit is provided. The rank sorting unit permits the participants to rank the thought results displayed in the thought unit following a given criteria (for example, priority in importance, economy, or novelty) and sorting them in accordance with their rank. Additionally, in the rank sorting unit the thought results are given evaluation marks corresponding to the ranks thereof. Subsequently, in order to classify the thought results in accordance with the criterion and sorting them in order of preference, for example, a ranking unit is provided composed of group of cells. Each group of cells include all thought results that are related by the criteria and within each group of cells the related thought results are sorted in accordance with importance, for example.

Finally, the thought results that have been classified according to their rank and sorted in the ranking unit are being transferred to a contents sorting unit. The contents sorting unit is used to sort and display in order of contents all the thought results proposed by the participants. In order to do this the contents sorting unit include sorting cells that display all thought results whose contents are similar to each other.

Additionally, the content sorting unit includes a totaling cell which displays the total of the evaluation marks provided by the participants to the thought results in the rank sorting unit. The totaling cell permits thought results preferred with respect to other thought results to be established because it displays the total of the evaluation marks corresponding to a plurality of thought results sorted under the same content. Accordingly, the described instrument for contemplation provides an efficient evaluation of proposed thought results as it permits classifying them in accordance to their content as well as specifying which of the proposed thought results are preferred with the respect to other proposed thought results.

As previously mentioned, Microsoft Excel 97 SR-1 file "SolvSamp.xls" is silent regarding selecting and/or classifying proposed solutions, displayed in a first group cells, and transferring the selected thought results to neighboring cells in order to select the best solution

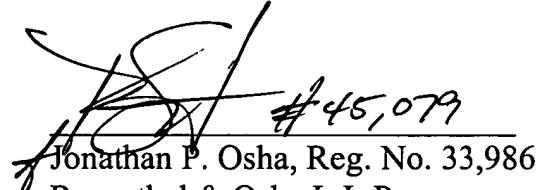
from a group of proposed solutions, such as described in claim 8. Also, Microsoft Excel 97 SR-1 file "SolvSamp.xls" does not disclose or suggest the classification of proposed thought results displayed in a first group of cells in accordance to specific criteria by displaying them in subsequent cells together with means which specify that thought results are preferred over other thought results.

Therefore, claims 8 and 14 are neither anticipated nor rendered obvious by Microsoft Excel 97 SR-1 file "SolvSamp.xls." Claims 9-13 and 15-17 depend from claims 8 and 14 respectively, and, thus, are allowable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Applicant believes this reply to be responsive to all outstanding issues and place the application in condition for allowance. If this belief is incorrect, or other issues arise, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned or his associates at the telephone number listed below. Please apply any charges not covered, or any credits, to Deposit Account 50-0591 (Reference Number 09564/002001).

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 9/16/02



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Marked-Up Version of the Amended Paragraphs

In the paragraph beginning on page 6, line 13:

Fig. 2 (a), (b), (c), (d), and (e) [is] are explanatory diagrams showing an improved main unit.

In the paragraph beginning on page 6, line 20:

Fig. 5 (a) and (b) schematically show[s] the instrument for contemplation of the third embodiment.